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## LONDON LETTER

London, Sept. 4, 1918.

To commemorate the entry of the U. S. into the war there has been presented to No. 10 Downing St. (the official residence of the First Lord of the Treasury), a full length portrait of George Washington, which, it is understood, is to hang in the Pitt dining room. The gift has been made by Lord and Lady Albemarle, and the canvas is a copy of one of the many portraits executed of the great American statesman by Charles Wilson Peale. It has already had somewhat of an eventful history, for it is said to have been executed for Henry Laurens and to have been annexed by Captain Keppel on taking Laurens prisoner.

## Larkin Porcelain Sale

The sale took place in July of a portion of the stock of Oriental and European porcelains belonging to the firm of the late T. J. Larkin, the dispersal occupying three days at Christie's. A total of over £11,000 was reached, several rare items fetching high figures. A late XII century Persian dish decorated with figures and horses in copper lustre, for instance, was bought by Messrs. Durlacher for 700 gns., while a bowl of a century later and ornamented with a figure and a design of leaves went to the same purchaser for 210 gns. The firm's premises in Bond St., which have now for so long been associated in the minds of lovers of fine ceramics with all that is finest in this particular department of collecting, have been secured by Messrs. W. Dickinson & Son of Wigmore St., W.

## Decision as to Medici Archives

A decision has been arrived at by the courts as to the sale of the Medici archives, the arrangements for which had to be cancelled at Christie's some time ago. It was ruled that as regards the state documents there was evidence that they belonged to Italy and not to the ambassadors, who had merely held them at the disposal of the various governments of the Florentine republic. They had, however, been allowed to remain with the Medici family as a personal privilege in order that its members might enjoy their use. Consequently, an injunction would be made to restrain their sale until the trial of the action. In regard to the other papers which were of archaeological interest, the law of 1909 was cited to enforce the owners to notify the Italian authorities of intention to export and put a stated price upon them, so that the Italian Government might purchase if they desired. It was pointed out that, supposing the papers had been disposed of at Christie's and the Government afterward succeeded in establishing their right to them, both the purchasers and Christie's might find themselves in considerable difficulty. The defendants were therefore advised not to separate the collection or to sell any of its papers apart from the State documents.

## Gift of a Gallery of Modern Foreign Art

The want of an adequate gallery for the housing of modern works by foreign artists has been felt in London for some time past, but this lack is soon to be supplied, for Mr. Joseph Duveen has presented to the Nation the necessary funds for the erection of a suitable building for this purpose. This will form an extension to the Tate Gallery (the Turner wing of which was presented by his father). The actual erection cannot of course take place until the war is over, but the generous offer has been accepted in advance by the trustees of the National Gallery. As a nation we are not rich in good examples of the works of modern continental artists, although Sir Hugh Lane and a few other public spirited enthusiasts have pointed the way. It is to be hoped that we shall eventually be able to boast of a collection which shall stand in the same relation to the National Gallery as the Luxembourg to the Louvre, and that adequate funds will be forthcoming to purchase wisely when the opportunity occurs.

## The Lady Auctioneer

One has grown accustomed to finding women in the majority of occupations formerly relegated to men, but one has hitherto not seen them performing the duties of the auctioneer in the salesroom. Such, however, was the case at Sotheby's, when Lady Beryl Gilbert's library came up for dispersal in July, Miss Evelyn Barlow, sister to Sir Montagu Barlow, senior partner in the firm, officiating as the auctioneer. There is really no adequate reason why the post should have been so exclusively occupied by mere man up to the present, for, granted sufficient knowledge of the type of work under the hammer and a due appreciation of its merits, woman should prove even more persuasive, especially as she is credited with having less sense of the value of money than her brethren. The innovation in this particular instance met with marked success. Miss Barlow is now a partner in Sotheby's.

## ITALIAN LETTER

Milan, Italy, Aug. 25, 1918.

A splendid portrait of Giuseppe Verdi has just been donated to the National Gallery of Modern Art at Rome by the Italian (Ferrarese) painter, Giovanni Boldini, for many years residing in Paris. The portrait is in pastel and by general consensus is estimated as among the artist's finest works. It was executed over thirty years ago at Paris when Verdi went there to assist at the premiere of his "Otello." For a long time the picture remained jealously preserved in the atelier of the artist, who persistently refused all offers to part with it. Now, however, his generous offer has assured the work permanently to Italy.

In a part of the ancient Church of St. Augustine at Rimini, shattered and damaged by earthquake last year, the superintendent of the restorations has just brought to light, under a thick layer of plaster, fragments of figures and representations of curious buildings. By means of intelligent researches on the part of Dr. Belli, a local archaeologist, the three parts of the anse were discovered

A prize of 1500 lire has been offered by the National Association "Trent and Trieste" for the best model of a medallion commemorating the declaration of war on Austria by the U. S. The medallion is to be presented to President Wilson. The competition is restricted to Italian artists.

Cavalier Eugenio Besana, whose death occurred recently, has bequeathed to the Brera, at Milan, the famous canvas by the late Filippo Carcano entitled "A Game of Billiards" executed by the celebrated Lombardian master more than fifty years ago, a work greatly esteemed by critics and one which was a special favorite with the artist himself.

Encouraged by the successful exhibition of last year designated "Children and Flowers," the well-known Milan art society "Famiglia Artistica" announces an autumn exhibition of works by contemporary Italian artists, based on the themes "Animals" and "Still-life." The show will, as usual, be held in the handsome galleries of the Society, in via Ugo Foscolo, and will open in mid-October. Inasmuch as the motives

## PARIS LETTER

Paris, Sept. 4, 1918.

The joint Salon at the Petit Palais recently closed its doors, with a receipt from admission fees of some \$16,000, which would not indicate an enormous public attendance. The total official sales were about \$35,000, which also strikes one as mediocre, although some of the French journals affect to regard it as extraordinary for the fourth year of the war. One should stop to recall that the Degas sale only three months ago produced more than a million dollars. It would not appear, then, that relatively the French people were taking an immense interest in the newer creations of the artists.

There is certainly an utter stagnation in art matters, due to the disarray of life wrought by the vicissitudes of war, as well as to the summer season. The town emptied itself much more than in any previous year. Two-thirds of the population went away during the critical weeks of the German drive and among them are included most of the persons whose opinion and example count in the world of art and of taste.

A review of the acquisitions of the State museums during the last twelve months is of less than usual interest. For the Louvre the total sum of \$18,750 (approximately) was expended. Among the paintings and other objects acquired there is nothing of really prime importance. Among the gifts by legacy or otherwise there are a ceiling by Paul Veronese from the Trevisani palace at Murano, a fine Greek head of Minerva in marble, a mortuary stone of Appollodorus of Sidon, the torso of a Roman emperor and several sketches by Géricault.

## "La Jaconde" in the Courts

The affair of "La Jaconde" is again before the public, the Italian Geri suing the State for one-fifth of the value of the painting upon the ground that its recovery was due to him. He has asked the First Chamber of the Tribunal of the Seine to appoint "experts" to estimate its value. This raises at once a question of curious interest. How can the value of such a work be expressed in terms of money! There is more than one American who would willingly give more than a million for "La Jaconde." If Geri's suit be decided in his favor he would receive, then, a fee of \$200,000!

## Good Prices for Engravings

The latest important sale at the Hôtel Drouot, that of the Lotz-Brissonneau collection of drawings and engravings, under the auspices of André Desvougues as commissaire-priseur, produced a total of \$13,000. The most notable among the engravings sold were the following: De Launay, after N. Lavreince, "La Consolation de l'Absence", \$190; Rembrandt, "Le Triomphe de Mardoche", \$97; and "La Mort de la Vierge", \$80; Meryon, "Le Stryge", \$542; "Le Pont au Change", \$816; "Le Galerie Notre Dame", \$362, and "Le Pont Neuf", \$380; Zorn, "La Valse", \$730, "En Omnibus", \$370, and "Mlle. Marja von Heijnz", \$795; Carrière, "Paul Verlaine", \$142. B. B.

## OBITUARY

(Continued from page 4)

## E. F. Bonaventure

stamped with the arms of every sovereign and bibliophile of universal repute, while the binding by Le Gascon, Boyet, Trauz-Bauzonet, Chambolle-Duru, and other heroes of the Grolierites, were seen in all their beauty. The shop was full of oddities, too—art objects and snuffboxes, of which he had a remarkable collection, portfolios of rare etchings, engravings, watercolors, etc. The funeral was held yesterday morning at Notre Dame de Lourdes Church, on Morningside Ave.

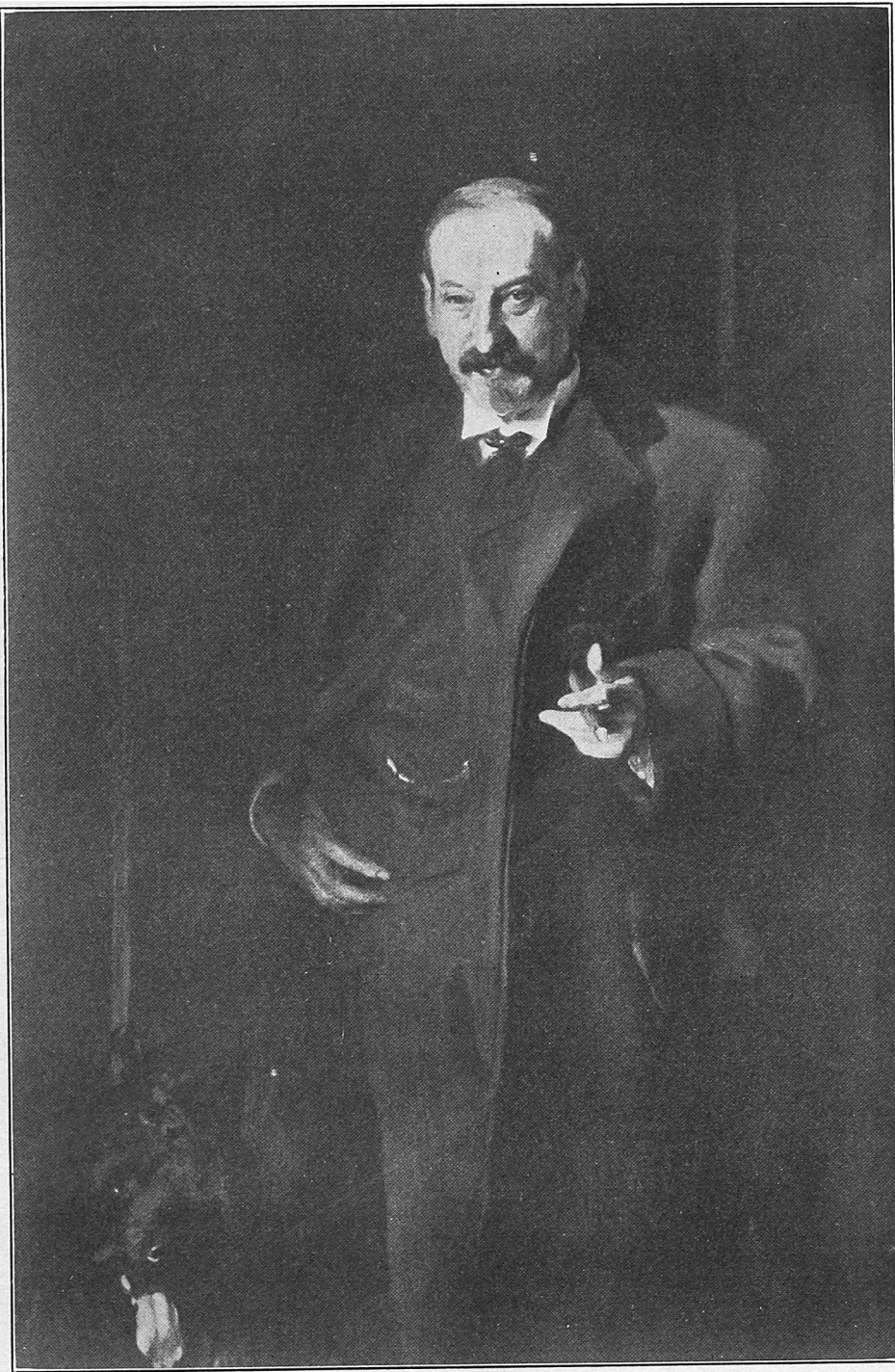
Mr. Bonaventure married twice. His second wife, who survives him, was Genevieve Townsend, daughter of George Alfred Townsend (Gath), the noted Civil War newspaper correspondent. Their children living are George Alfred Bonaventure, second lieutenant in the U. S. Army in France; the Misses Yvone and Simonne Bonaventure, and Mrs. Foster Ware. He is also survived by a son, Edmond C. Bonaventure, a member of the Seventh N. Y. Guard, and a daughter, Mrs. Thomas E. Flostroy, by his first marriage.

## Sir Walter Armstrong.

Sir Walter Armstrong, the late Director of the National Art Gallery of Ireland, died Aug. 8 at his residence in London.

He was born in 1850, was educated at Harrow and Exeter College, Oxford, and for some ten years after 1880 was art critic to several newspapers, notably Pall Mall Gazette, the Manchester Guardian, and the old Manchester Examiner. In 1892 he succeeded the late Henry Doyle as Director of the Dublin Gallery; and in this post Armstrong remained for over 20 years, his services being recognized by a knighthood in 1899.

His study of the work of the early English painters was close and profound and his works on Reynolds, Lawrence, Gainsborough and Romney are standard authorities on the work of those artists.



ASHER WERTHEIMER  
(Died in London, August 9, 1918)  
John S. Sargent

Courtesy Knoedler &amp; Co.

to be decorated by large and still well-preserved paintings. The church dates from 1247, and the newly discovered frescoes belong in part to the period of Giotto's art. They are very interesting and some of them are stated to be truly admirable; one, especially, merits the attention of students, because, according to the well-known art critic, Malaguzzi Valeri, it offers probably a new portrait of Dante. In this painting one sees a procession of personages magnificently dressed, among whom, in the first row, are three poets. Judging from the crowns of laurel encircling their brows; of these three, one in profile, full length, in voluminous robes of a purely Florentine type, recalls the characteristic features of Dante, the aquiline nose, the great flashing eyes, the prominent chin, and the baretto of folded cloth across the broad forehead and covering the neck. In another of the three figures, one can distinguish a likeness of Petrarch.

selected for this exhibit offer a wide field to the artists who will contribute, it is sure to attract the attention of art-lovers and the general public.

The semi-annual exhibition of the Brera Academy will open at the Brera Palace, Milan, in September. There will be two "Prince Humbert" prizes of 4000 lire each, three gold medals awarded by the Ministry of Public Instruction, and for the second time the Academy will purchase from the funds of the "Cassani foundation" the best work exhibited on the subject "A search for true sentiment." This picture will then be added to the collection in the Brera's Gallery of Modern Art.

Ivan Lávretsky.

F. Usher De Voll is devoting his time to work for the "cause," more especially war posters, while Mrs. De Voll sells her "Liberty Preserves"—the product of her "war garden"—for the benefit of the Red Cross.